



# California Regional Water Quality Control Board

## Santa Ana Region

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For Immediate Release

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### **Regional Water Board Proposes \$429,000 Penalty For Water Quality Violations**

Riverside, Calif. --The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board is proposing that a mandatory \$429,000 penalty be levied against Yucaipa Valley Water District (YVWD) for repeated pollution discharge violations into San Timoteo Creek. A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and waste discharge requirements issued by the Regional Board regulate these discharges.

The Regional Board's complaint states that between January and April 2000, the San Bernardino County-based water district exceeded water quality standards on 146 occasions. Samples showed slightly elevated levels of one or more of the following: coliform (a common bacterium found in human and animal wastes); turbidity (the degree of cloudiness in water); and/or nitrogen (from sewage). The California Water Code requires mandatory minimum penalties for serious or chronic violations of NPDES permit effluent limits. The Water Code provision requiring mandatory penalties became effective on January 1, 2000, as a result of the adoption of Senate Bill 709.

The Regional Board established the bacteria limits in 1986 to protect those who may wade or play in San Timoteo Creek, and set the nitrogen limits in 1994 to protect drinking water uses of the area's groundwater resources.

Yucaipa Valley Water District officials will have the opportunity to address and contest the mandatory penalties.

Since the mid-'90s, the Regional Water Board has cited the Yucaipa district on two other occasions for its failure to meet these water quality standards. Yucaipa officials

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have responded with various wastewater treatment improvements in an attempt to comply with state requirements. As of May, the district is now in compliance with coliform standards.

The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, which is part of the California Environmental Protection Agency, implements State and federal water quality protection programs in Southern California's Santa Ana River drainage basin.

